

AARON · SAIZ · AZACETA · STEWART

PUNISHER

MARVEL 3

“

That's when Frank knew...he was the only one who still heard the screaming. And the only one who could make it stop.

”



PARENTAL
ADVISORY

AFTER RETIRED MARINE FRANK CASTLE'S WIFE AND CHILDREN WERE KILLED BY STRAY GUNFIRE DURING A SHOOT-OUT IN CENTRAL PARK, HE BEGAN A ONE-MAN VIGILANTE WAR ON CRIME. ARMED WITH A VAST ARSENAL AND GRIM DETERMINATION, HE BECAME THE...

PUNISHER

THE CULT OF ASSASSINS KNOWN AS THE HAND MADE FRANK CASTLE AN OFFER HE COULDN'T REFUSE: BECOME THEIR HIGH SLAYER IN EXCHANGE FOR THE RESURRECTION OF HIS LONG-DEAD WIFE, MARIA. FRANK IS JUST ONE IN A LONG LINE OF FABLED FISTS OF THE BEAST, THE HAND HAVING OBSERVED HIM SINCE HIS EARLY CHILDHOOD.

FRANK NOW RESIDES IN THE HAND'S FORTRESS IN JAPAN ALONG WITH MARIA, WHO REMAINS UNAWARE OF THEIR TRAGIC PAST AND HER OWN DEATH. FRANK IS USING THE HAND'S RESOURCES TO BATTLE THE APOSTLES OF WAR, A GROUP OF FANATICAL ARMS DEALERS LED BY THE GOD OF WAR, ARES.

THE KING OF KILLERS

Book ONE, Chapter THREE

"FRANK'S FIRST SACRAMENT"

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BEHIND THEIR
MASQUERADES
AND RITUALIZED
COWARDICE...

...ALL RELIGIONS STILL
MANAGE TO TEACH US ONE
FUNDAMENTAL TRUTH,

THAT SOME SORT
OF GOD MADE MAN
IN ITS IMAGE.



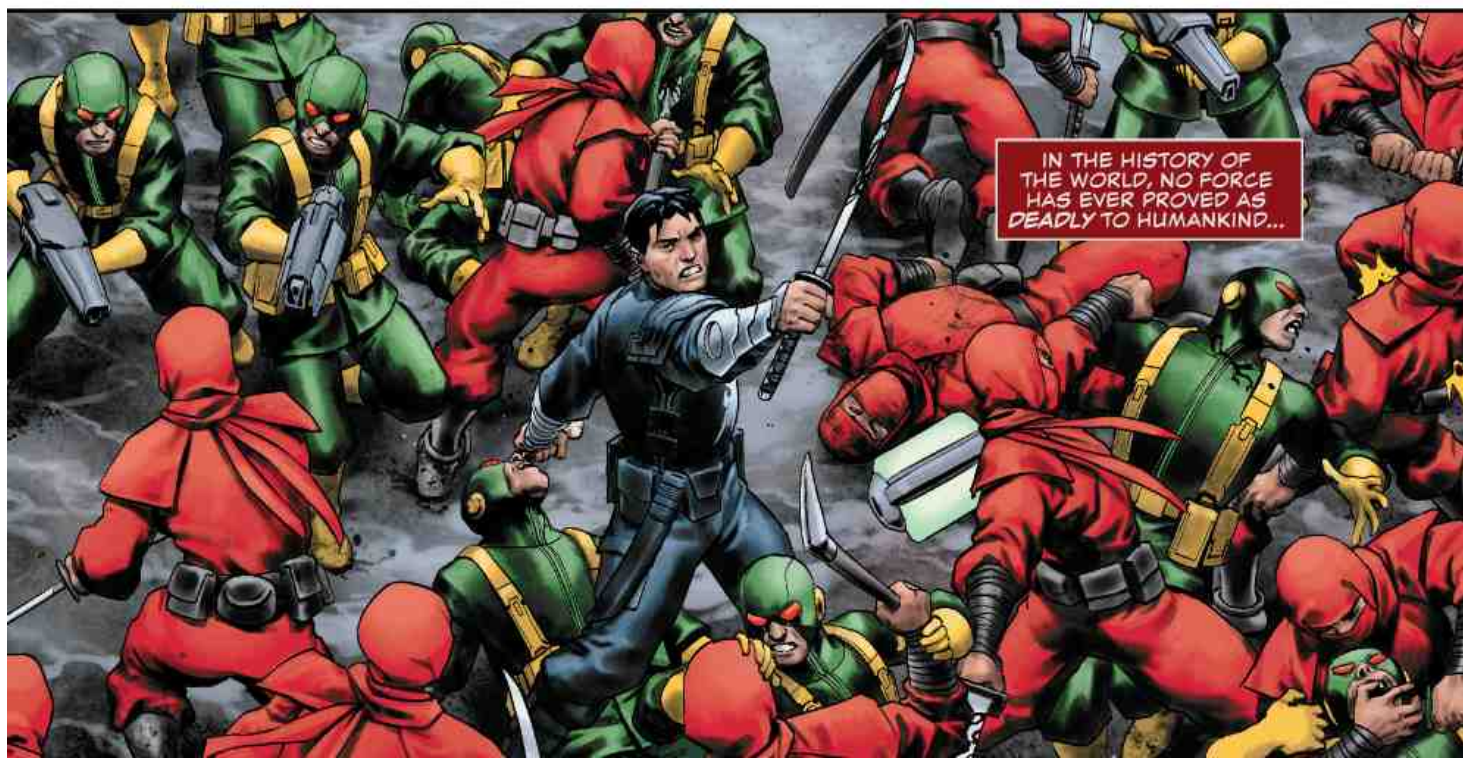
THEN SLAUGHTERED THOSE
MEN BY THE BILLIONS
WHEN THEY GREW
BEYOND GOD'S CONTROL.



FROM THE VERY BEGINNING,
HUMANITY REFUSED TO LIVE IN
THE SHADOW OF THEIR CREATOR.



INCLUDING IN
THEIR CAPACITY
FOR CARNAGE.



IN THE HISTORY OF
THE WORLD, NO FORCE
HAS EVER PROVED AS
DEADLY TO HUMANKIND...



...AS
HUMANKIND
ITSELF.



IN THIS, ONE
SEES THE ULTIMATE
MEANING OF LIFE.



THE TAKING OF
LIFE FROM OTHERS.

GOD BLESS
THE BEAST.

THE CITADEL OF THE HAND.

TODAY,
MANY LIVES
WERE
TAKEN!

AND MANY
GIVEN! IN THE
NAME OF THE
BEAST!

TODAY, THE
FLAG OF THE
PUNISHER FLIES
ABOVE THE CORPSE-
HEAPED RUIN OF
THE HOUSE OF
HYDRA!

TODAY...
HAS BEEN A
VERY GOOD
DAY.

THE NEWLY
ORDAINED **HIGH SLAYER**
OF THE HAND CONTINUES
TO LEAD US BOLDLY DOWN
THE PATH OF HALLOWED
SLAUGHTER.

AND HIS
ACOLYTES STAND
READY FOR ANOTHER
BLOOD-DRENCHED
BENEDICTION FROM
THEIR UNHOLY
PONTIFF.

THEIR NEXT
LESSON FROM
THE KING OF
KILLERS.





WHAT DO YOU WANNA KNOW?

GGHHNR!

WHERE TO AIM WHEN YOU'RE SHOOTING AT A MAN WHO CAN FLY?



HRRNN!

WHICH BODY PARTS SKRULLS CAN REGROW AND WHICH THEY CAN'T, ESPECIALLY WHEN THOSE PARTS ARE CHAINED TO YOUR TRAILER HITCH?



NNNNRRRRGG!!!

BEST WAYS TO CARVE UP A NAZI TO GET HIM TO TALK?



THE TIME FOR THAT SORT OF TEACHING WILL COME.

BUT THIS HUMBLE PRIESTESS HAD SOMETHING ELSE IN MIND.



I LOOKED INTO YOUR EYES WHEN YOU WERE A CHILD AND SAW WHAT YOU WERE ALREADY BECOMING.

THE PUNISHER WAS NOT BORN IN CENTRAL PARK, OR ON ANY FOREIGN BATTLEFIELD.



I WOULD LIKE US ALL TO HEAR OF FRANK CASTLE'S FIRST SACRAMENT ON THE ROAD TO SALVATION.

TELL US... OF THE FIRST TIME YOU KILLED A MAN.







PEOPLE
SCATTERED
LIKE RATS.

EIEIEGH!

WINDOWS OPENED
ALL ALONG FRANK'S
STREET AND THEN
QUICKLY CLOSED, THE
BLINDS YANKED DOWN.

HHHRRGGH!

IT HAD BEEN A
FIGHT AT FIRST.
THEN IT BECAME...
SOMETHING ELSE.

HE BEAT THEM BOTH,
THE MAN AND THE
WOMAN, GOING BACK
AND FORTH BETWEEN
THE TWO.

IN THE MIDDLE
OF THE STREET, IN
BROAD DAYLIGHT.



WWEIEGH!

THE WHOLE BLOCK WENT
SILENT, EXCEPT FOR THE
WET, SLOPPY POUNDING
OF FLESH AND THE
CRUNCH OF BONES.

AND, OF
COURSE, THE
SCREAMING.



HRRRAAIEEE!

NO ONE SAID A
WORD. NO ONE
CALLED THE
POLICE. NO ONE
LIFTED A FINGER
TO STOP IT.



UUURGHK!

HHHK!



NO ONE
AT ALL.

HHAAARRGH!





HE DIDN'T
SLEEP FOR DAYS.
DIDN'T EAT.

GOT TO WHERE
HE COULDN'T
HEAR A THING
BEING SAID
AROUND HIM...



...OVER THE
SCREAMS.

THE ONES THAT
ECHOED THROUGH
HIS HEAD
DAY AND NIGHT.



HE WENT TO THE
FUNERAL FOR THE
MURDERED COUPLE,
HOPING IT WOULD
HELP HIM BURY
THEM FOR GOOD.



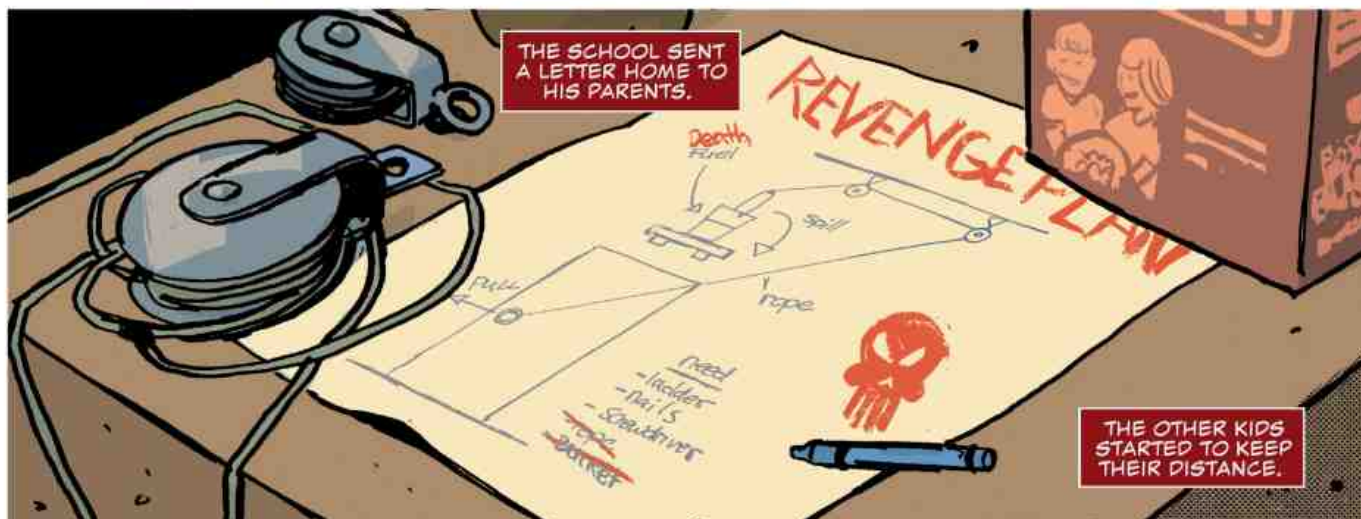
NO ONE
ELSE CAME.



THAT'S WHEN FRANK KNEW...
HE WAS THE ONLY ONE WHO
STILL HEARD THE SCREAMING.



AND THE ONLY
ONE WHO COULD
MAKE IT STOP.









EVERYONE
EXCEPT THE
PUNISHER.





AND YOU NEVER TOLD A SINGLE SOUL ABOUT THAT DAY, DID YOU?

OF COURSE YOU DIDN'T, UNTIL NOW.

NOW THAT YOU'VE FINALLY EMBRACED YOUR TRUE DESTINY.



THE BEAST HAS WALKED WITH YOU SINCE THE VERY BEGINNING, AND YOU HAVE PERFORMED MIRACLES IN HIS NAME.

TELL ME, HOW MANY MORE HAVE YOU KILLED SINCE THAT DAY IN QUEENS?



NOT ENOUGH.



FRANK CASTLE...
...YOU ARE TOO BEAUTIFUL FOR WORDS.



BEHOLD! I GIVE YOU TRUE DEVOTION TO VIOLENCE! A MASTER OF MURDER, THE HIGHEST OF ART FORMS!

BEHOLD THE PUNISHER! THE FIST OF THE BEAST!



IT'S DONE.

HE'S TOLD ME EVERYTHING.



I...SAID NOTHING.

THE LEADER OF THE APOSTLES OF WAR. THE ONES WHO SOLD YOU YOUR GUNS.

YOU WERE SCREAMING HIS NAME. TO MAKE THE PAIN STOP.

NO...I NEVER...

I'VE SEEN... WHAT HE DOES... TO PEOPLE...WHO BETRAY HIM.



YOU WERE SCREAMING ON THE INSIDE.

AND YOU DIDN'T BETRAY HIM. HE WANTS ME TO KNOW.

HE JUST WANTED TO MAKE ME WORK FOR HIS NAME.



ARES.



ARES, THE
GOD OF WAR.
I KNOW WHERE
TO FIND HIM.

ALL
NINJA TO THE
CHOPPERS.

AH! BUT
BEFORE YOU GO
FORTH TO DO THE
LORD'S WORK,
HIGH SLAYER...

...I'M AFRAID
THERE IS ONE SMALL
PIECE OF HAND
BUSINESS THAT MUST
BE ADJUDICATED.



THESE TWO
LOYAL NINJA
COME BEFORE YOU
TODAY TO SETTLE
A DISPUTE.



A BROTHER
OF ONE NINJA HAD
SPOKEN *DISRESPECTFULLY*
OF THE OTHER, SO THE
AGGRIEVED NINJA CUT OUT
THE BROTHER'S TONGUE,
AS IS OUR CUSTOM.

BUT I'M
AFRAID HE DID A
RATHER *POOR* JOB
OF THE CUTTING, AND
THE TONGUELESS
NINJA DIED.



SO THE DEAD NINJA'S BROTHER
KILLED THE OTHER NINJA'S
BROTHER IN *RETRIBUTION*,
AS SEEMED FAIR.

BUT THAT
BROTHER HAD DONE
NOTHING TO CAUSE OFFENSE,
SO THE ONE NINJA IS NOW
DEMANDING *BLOOD MONEY*
FROM THE OTHER.

OR FOR THAT
NINJA TO ACCEPT
HIS *DISHONOR*
AND PERFORM
SEPPUKU.

IS THIS
TRUE?



YES, HIGH
SLAYER.

YES, SIR FIST.
WE COME BEFORE
YOU TODAY SEEKING
JUSTICE IN THE
NAME OF THE--





YOU KILL
WHO I TELL
YOU!

NO ONE
ELSE!

OR
I KILL
YOU!

WE ARE YOURS
TO COMMAND, HIGH
SLAYER. EVERY SOUL
HERE IS BUT A BULLET
IN YOUR GUN UNTIL
DEATH, AND EVEN
BEYOND, BEAST
WILLING.

BUT WE ARE
ALL THE CHILDREN
OF OUR GOD, OF HE
WHO GIVES BREATH TO
ALL MURDEROUS
WILL.

IS IT NOT
OUR DUTY TO
BE AS THE
BEAST HAS
MADE US?



I'M THE
FIST NOW, AND
YOUR DUTY IS TO
HELP ME END
MY WAR.



TO
END IT.

YES, OF
COURSE.

PERHAPS IF WE WENT
TO THE TEMPLE AND
PRAYED FOR--

WE MOVE
NOW. I'LL LEAD
THE TEAM MYSELF.
WE'LL HIT ARES AND
HIS APOSTLES OF
WAR WITH
EVERY--

HIGH
SLAYER! I'M
SO SORRY!

WE DON'T
KNOW WHAT'S
COME OVER HER.
WE CAN'T SEEM
TO CALM HER
OR--

WHAT?
WHAT THE
HELL IS
IT?



IT'S LADY
MARIA.

I'M
AFRAID
SOMETHING'S
WRONG WITH
YOUR WIFE.







THE PUNISHER
DECIDES IT IS
BEST THAT HE
STAY WITH
HIS WIFE.

I THOUGHT
YOUR MASTER,
MORE THAN ANYONE,
WOULD UNDERSTAND
HOW TO SHOW ME
THE PROPER
RESPECT.



THE RAID AGAINST
THE GOD OF
WAR'S ACROPOLIS
GOES FORWARD
WITHOUT HIM.

I THOUGHT
HE'D BE SENDING
ME A WAR.



FOR THE MANY
NINJA WHO WILL
FALL THIS DAY...

...THE VERY
MANY...

BUT THIS...
THIS IS AN
INSULT.

...IT WILL BE A
TRUE ENDING.

AS THERE'LL BE
NOTHING OF THEM
LEFT TO RESURRECT.

WHERE IS
YOUR MASTER
HIDING?!

I
DON'T WANT HIS
FOOT SOLDIERS!



I WANT THE
PUNISHER!

DO YOU
HEAR ME,
CASTLE?!

YOUR GOD
IS CALLING
YOU OUT!!!



GOD MADE
MAN IN ITS
IMAGE.

AND THEN
CAME THE
BEAST.

TALK TO YOUR
FATHER. TELL
HIM WHY YOU'RE
HERE.



THE BEAST CAME
TO DEFILE WHAT
GOD HAD MADE.

I'VE LOST
MY MIND.
THAT'S WHY
I'M HERE.

THERE IS
NOTHING LOST
ABOUT YOU, BROTHER
CASTLE. THE BEAST
HAS BEEN WITH YOU
EVERY MOMENT FROM
YOUR FIRST KILL
UNTIL NOW.



TO TURN THE
LIVING INTO
THE DEAD ONE
BLESSED SLAYING
AT A TIME.

BESEECH
YOUR FATHER.
AND HE WILL HEAR
YOUR PRAYER.

YOU HAVE
SEEN THE PROOF.
FELT ITS HEART BEATING
NEXT TO YOURS. TELL
HIM WHY YOU'RE
HERE.



AND IN THE
GREATEST
OF HIS MANY
ABOMINATIONS...

TELL HIM HOW
MUCH YOU LOVE
YOUR WIFE.

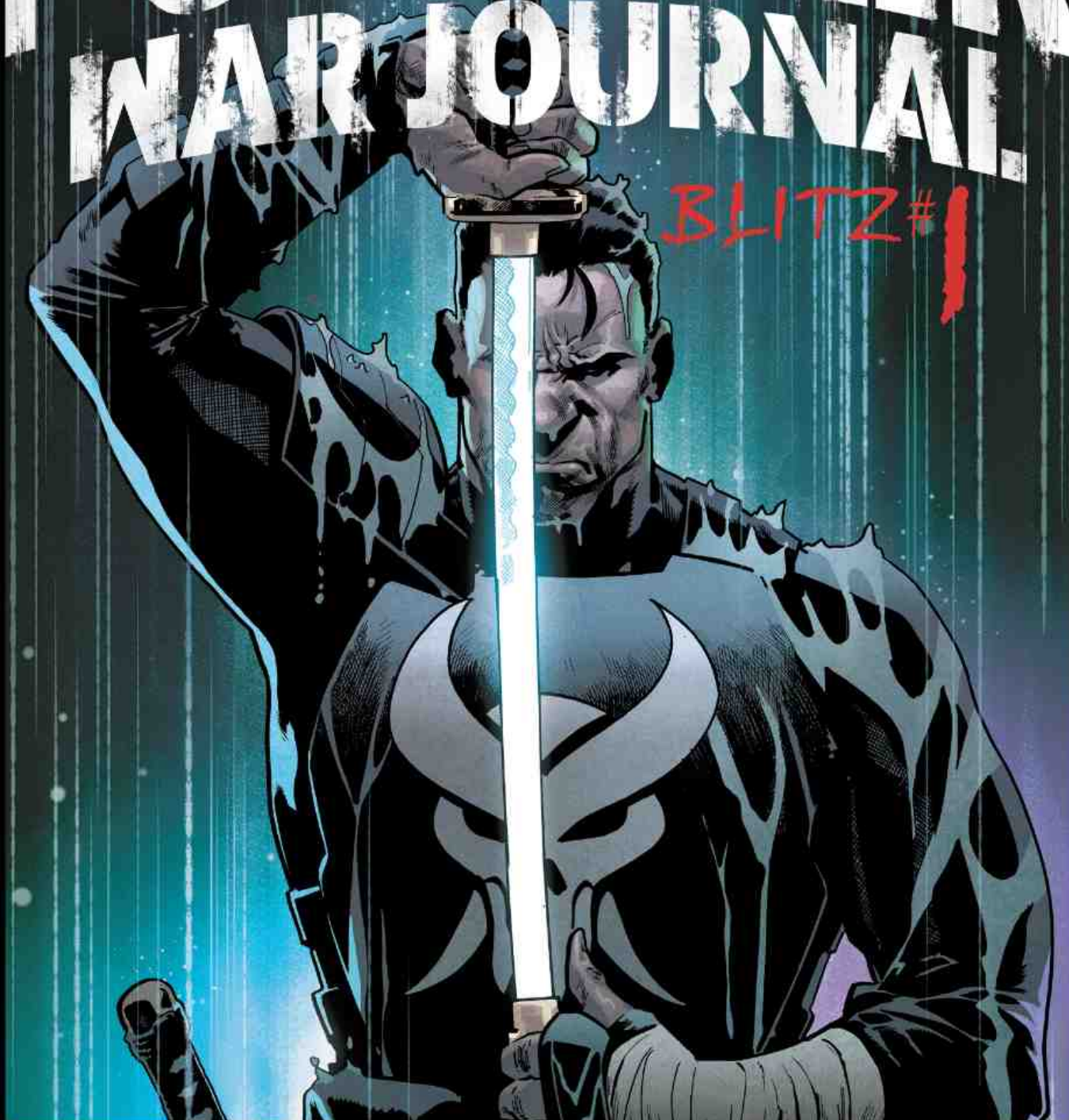
...THE BEAST CAME
TO TURN THE DEAD
INTO THE LIVING.

TELL
THE BEAST
HOW MUCH
YOU MISS YOUR
CHILDREN.



^{NEXT:} PUNISHER WAR JOURNAL

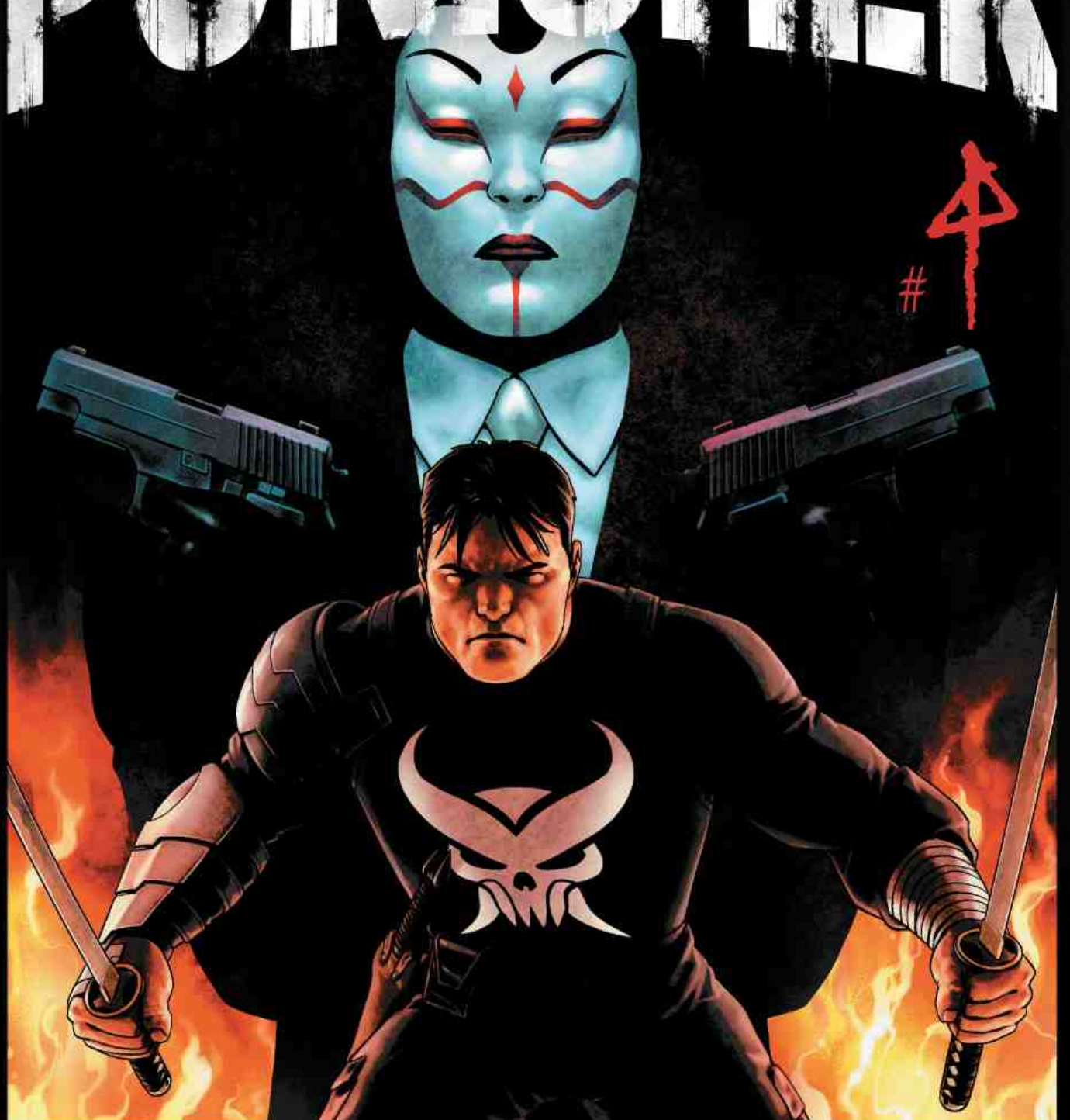
BLITZ#1



THE HATE-MONGER KNOWS THAT A BANNER CANNON IN THE RIGHT PAIR OF HANDS GOES A LONG WAY. NOW, WITH THE HAND AT HIS DISPOSAL, FRANK CASTLE IS READY TO SMOKE HIM OUT. BUT NOT ONLY HAS THE HATE-MONGER GONE TO GROUND, HE'S ALSO FIGHTING BACK. IT'S NOT GOING TO CHANGE ANYTHING BUT THE DEATH TOLL...

NEXT:

PUNISHER



FRANK CASTLE IS DETERMINED TO USE THE WARRIORS OF THE HAND TO END HIS WAR ONCE AND FOR ALL. BUT THE WORLD'S NEWEST AND DEADLIEST DEALERS OF WILDLY POWERFUL ARMS, THE APOSTLES OF WAR, ARE PROVING TO BE THE PUNISHER'S TOUGHEST FOES YET. NOT TO MENTION, THE ASSASSINS LADY BULLSEYE AND LORD DEATHSTRIKE HAVE BEEN HIRED TO EXPOSE THE PUNISHER AS A PRETENDER TO THE THRONE OF THE BEAST.

